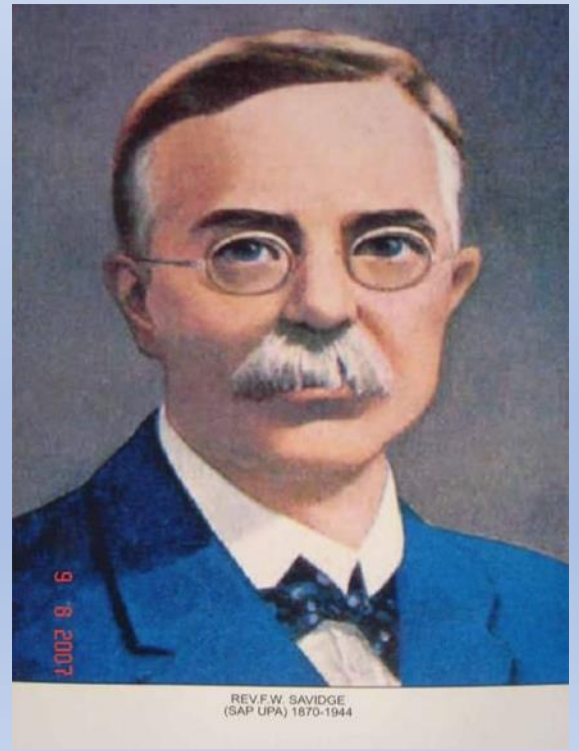
Frederick W. Savidge

Stretham’s forgotten Missionary

By
Mike Petty



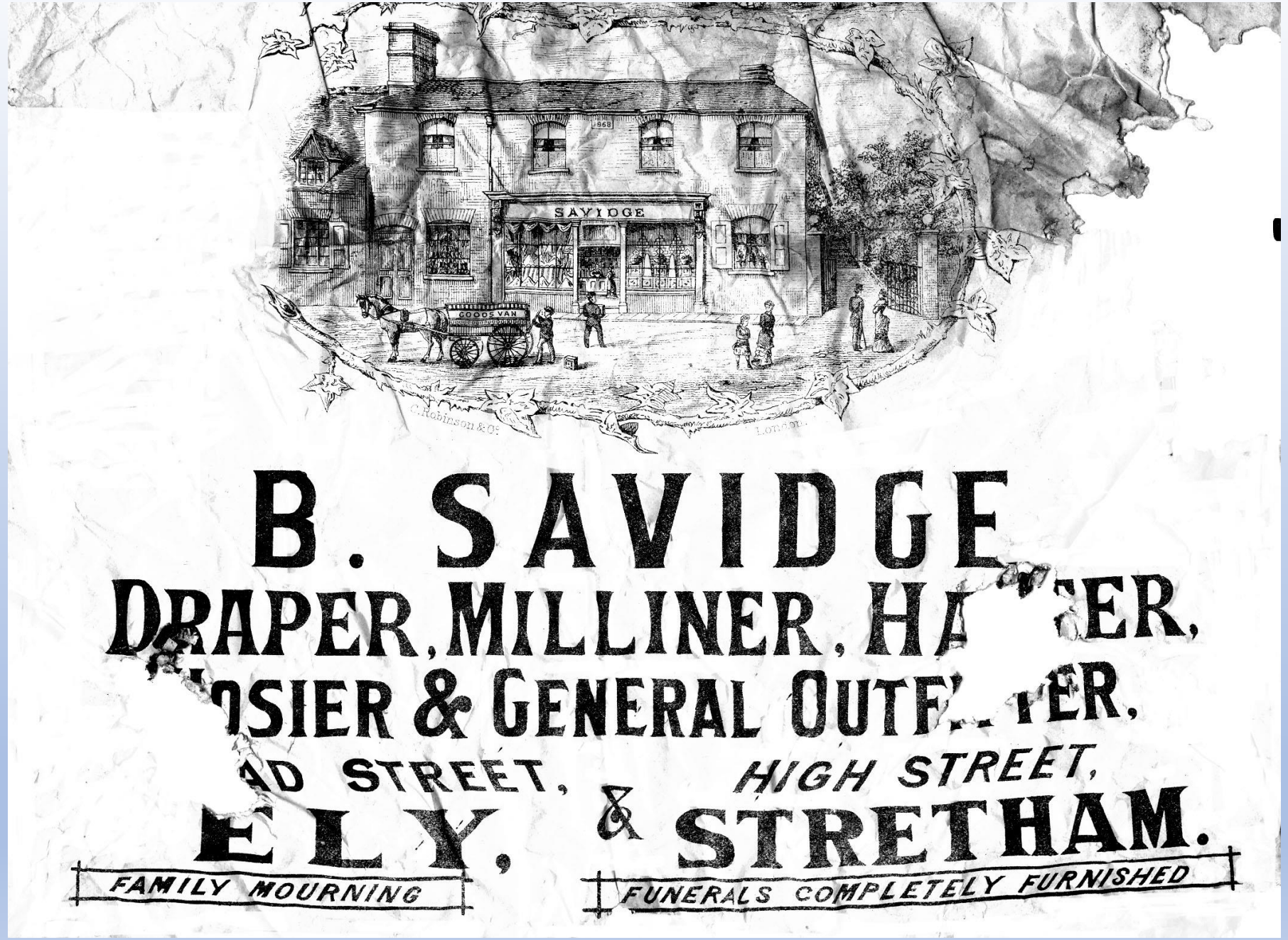
Frederick William Savidge was born in 1862, the fourth child of Briggs Savidge and his wife Sara (nee Currie) of Stretham.

At the time of FWS' birth Briggs Savidge was a tailor's assistant living in Red Lion Street, Stretham (now renamed Chapel Street).

By 1868 Briggs had become a shopkeeper, rebuilding Luke Curtis' thatched shop (the present Post Office).

There he traded as a Draper, Milliner, Hatter, Hosier and General Outfitter

He also established another shop in Ely



In December 1884 when a new Methodist Church was planned in Stretham Briggs was a supporter.

Two of his sons, FWS, then described as a Grocer's Assistant, and his elder brother John, were named in the Indenture to buy the land.

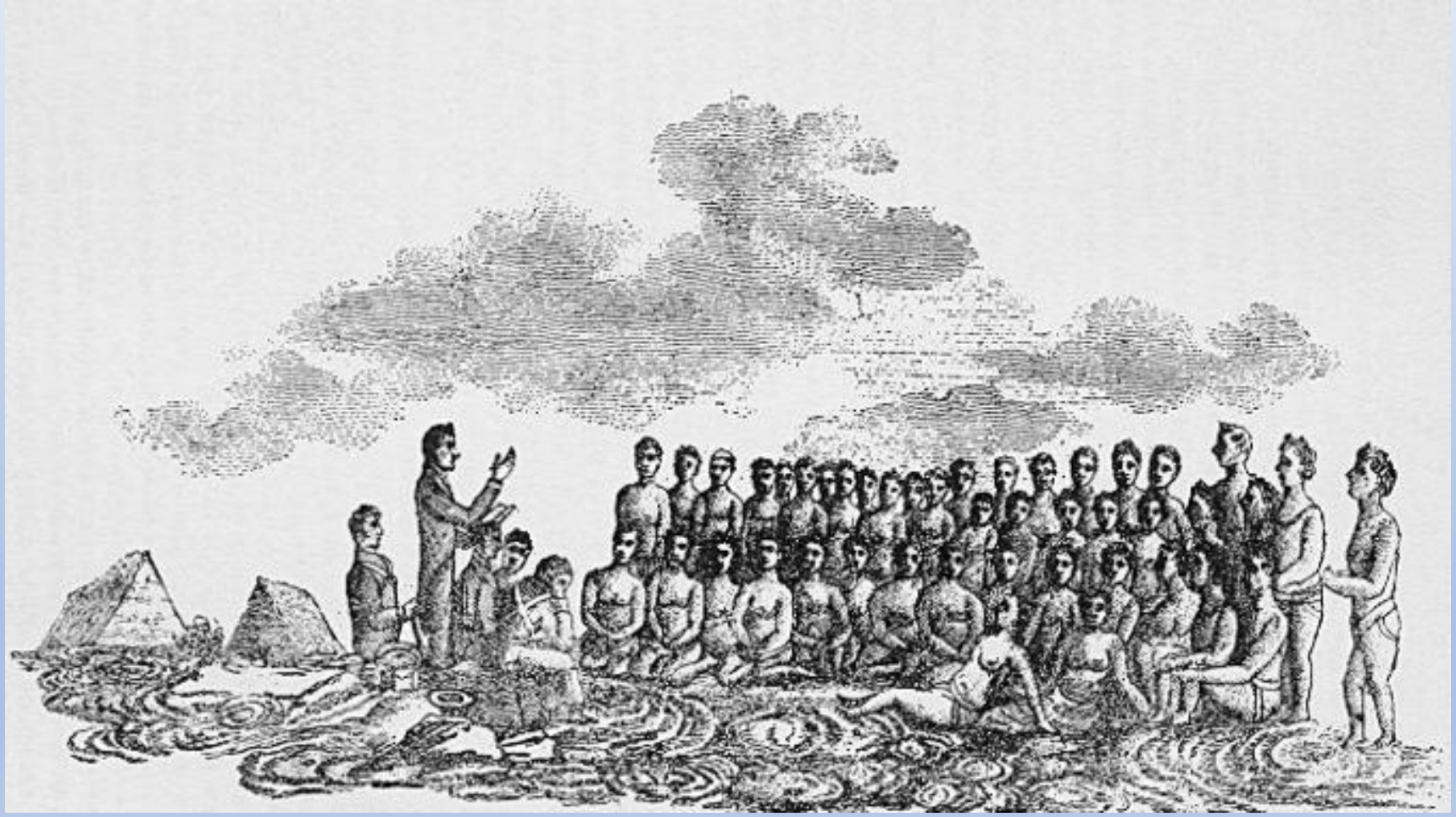
FWS's name appears on one of the large stones at the front of the chapel which opened on 15th July 1885.

FWS attended the King’s School, in the shadow of Ely Cathedral, and later established a photographer’s business in the City. It was a skill he would use in distant places

In the 1891 census FWS was listed at the home of his parents in Stretham.

By then he was working as a schoolmaster in London. where he met his future missionary partner J.H. Lorrain. The two became friends through their congregation at the Highgate Road Baptist Church in London.

In 1891 he accepted a post offered by the Arthington Aborigines Mission to work in India.



FWS sailed for India in October 1891 and arrived in Calcutta. There he met up with J.H. Lorrain and together they worked as pioneering missionaries.

Between 1894 and 1897 they were at Mizoram, a remote mountainous area of India close to the borders of Burma.

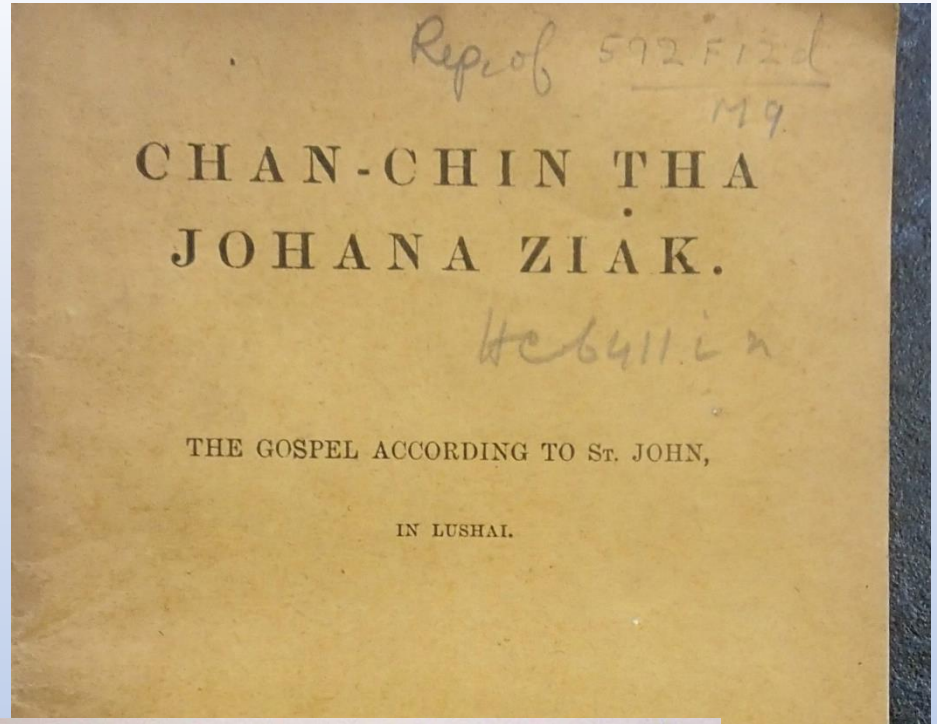
Mizoram

4.SAVIDGE & LORRAIN : COMING OUT FROM KASSALONG (CHITTAGONG HILLS DIST.) JANUARY 1893

6. BOAT CARRYING : F.W. SAVIDGE & LORRAIN, 11th JAN. 1894 MIZORAM

Savidge, a professional teacher before he became a missionary was an expert in identifying potential leaders and training them. Lorrain, on the other hand was a born linguist and he devoted himself to Bible translation and production of Christian literature”.

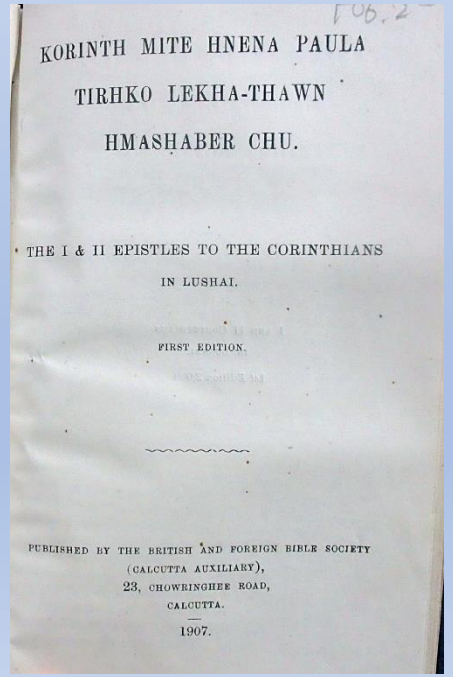
Together they were entirely responsible for the creation of written language in Mizo, beginning of literacy, origin of formal education and establishment of churches in Mizoram. They devised the original Mizo alphabets based on Roman script, prepared the first book and dictionary in Mizo



CHAN-CHIN THA JOHANA ZIAK.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN,

IN LUSHAI.



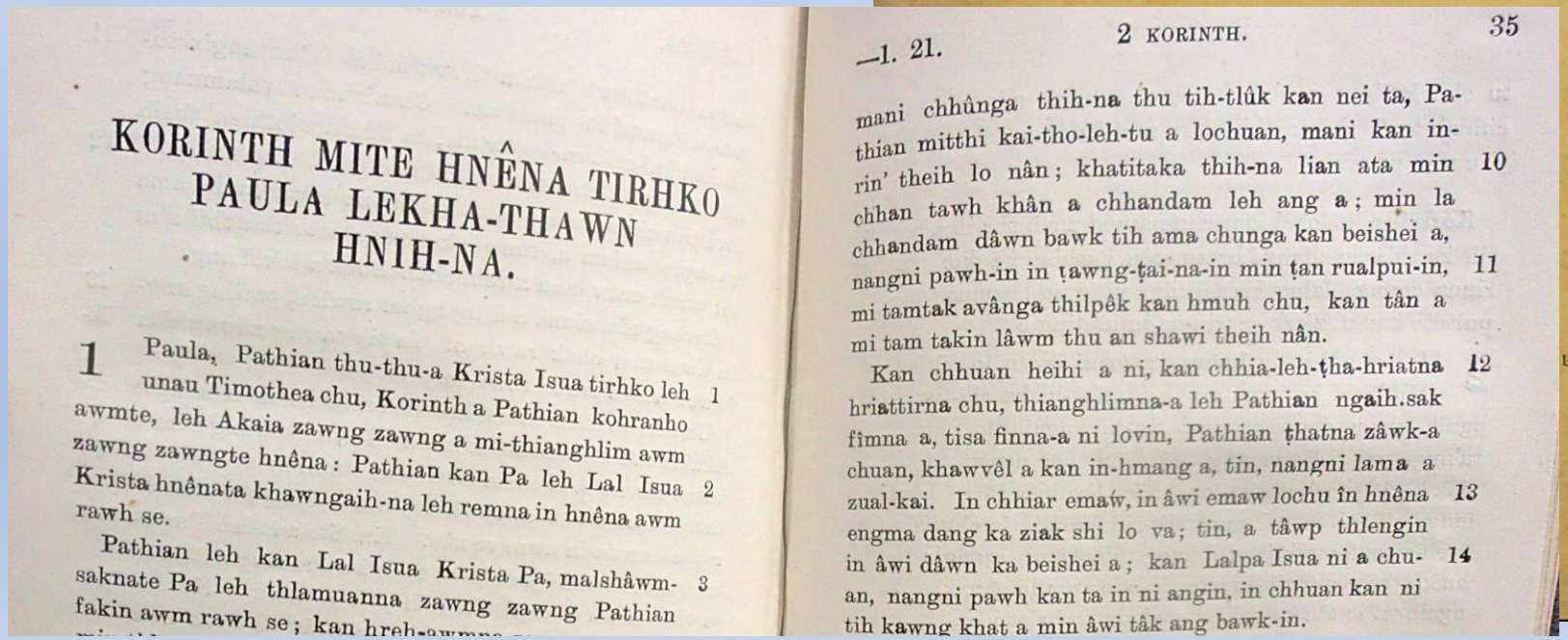
KORINTH MITE HNENA PAULA TIRHKO LEKHA-THAWN HMASHABER CHU.

THE I & II EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS IN LUSHAI.

FIRST EDITION.

PUBLISHED BY THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY (CALCUTTA AUXILIARY), 23, CHOWRINGHEE ROAD, CALCUTTA.

1907.



KORINTH MITE HNÊNA TIRHKO PAULA LEKHA-THAWN HNIH-NA.

1 Paula, Pathian thu-thu-a Krista Isua tirhko leh 1
unau Timothea chu, Korinth a Pathian kohranho
awmte, leh Akaia zawng zawng a mi-thianghlim awm
zawng zawngte hnêna: Pathian kan Pa leh Lal Isua 2
Krista hnênata khawngaih-na leh remna in hnêna awm
rawh se.

Pathian leh kan Lal Isua Krista Pa, malshâwm- 3
saknate Pa leh thlamuanna zawng zawng Pathian
fakin awm rawh se; kan hreh-

—1. 21. 2 KORINTH. 35

mani chhûnga thih-na thu tih-tlûk kan nei ta, Pa-
thian mitthi kai-tho-leh-tu a lochuan, mani kan in-
rin' theih lo nân; khatitaka thih-na lian ata min 10
chhan tawh khân a chhandam leh ang a; min la
chhandam dâwn bawk tih ama chunga kan beishei a,
nangni pawh-in in ṭawng-ṭai-na-in min ṭan rualpui-in, 11
mi tamtak avânga thilpêk kan hmuh chu, kan tân a
mi tam takin lâwm thu an shawi theih nân.

Kan chhuan heihi a ni, kan chhia-leh-ṭha-hriatna 12
hriattirna chu, thianghlimna-a leh Pathian ngaih.sak
fîmna a, tisa finna-a ni lovin, Pathian ṭhatna zâwk-a
chuan, khawvêl a kan in-hmang a, tin, nangni lama a
zual-kai. In chhiar emaw, in âwi emaw lochu în hnêna 13
engma dang ka ziak shi lo va; tin, a tâwp thlengin
in âwi dâwn ka beishei a; kan Lalpa Isua ni a chu- 14
an, nangni pawh kan ta in ni angin, in chhuan kan ni
tih kawng khat a min âwi tâk ang bawk-in.

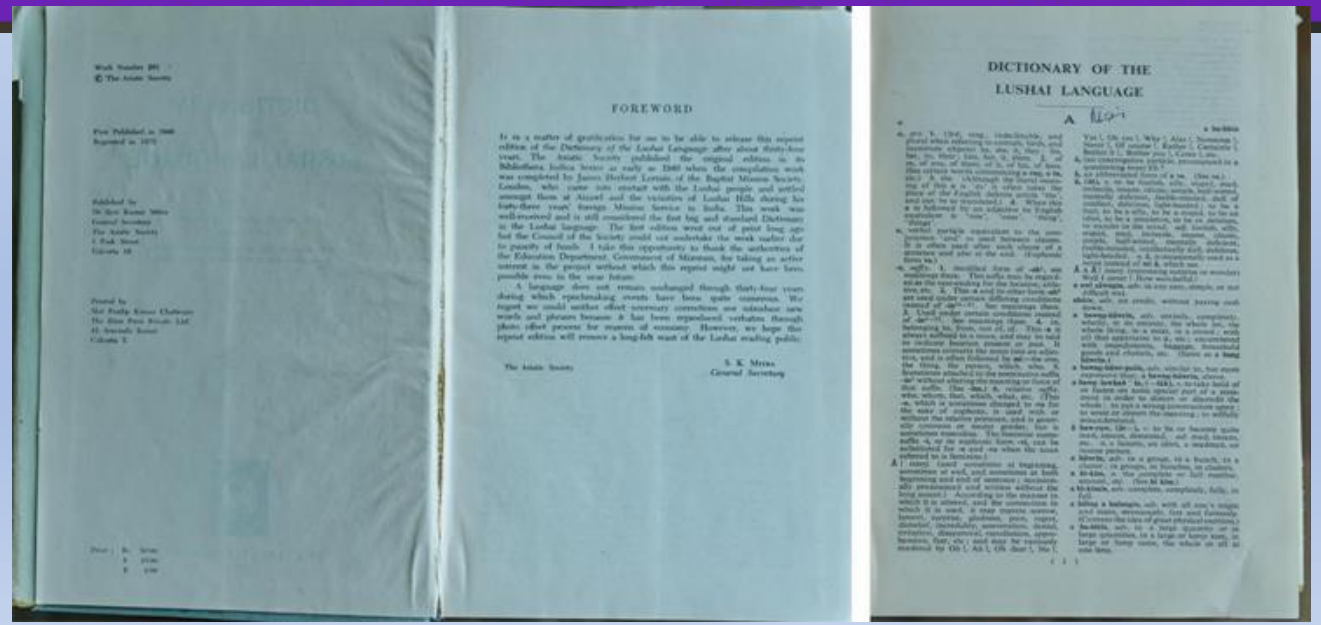
1896 – First place of Christian worship established

1896 – First Mizo Convert Taibawnga

1897- They were joined by Rev DE Jones (Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Foreign Mission)

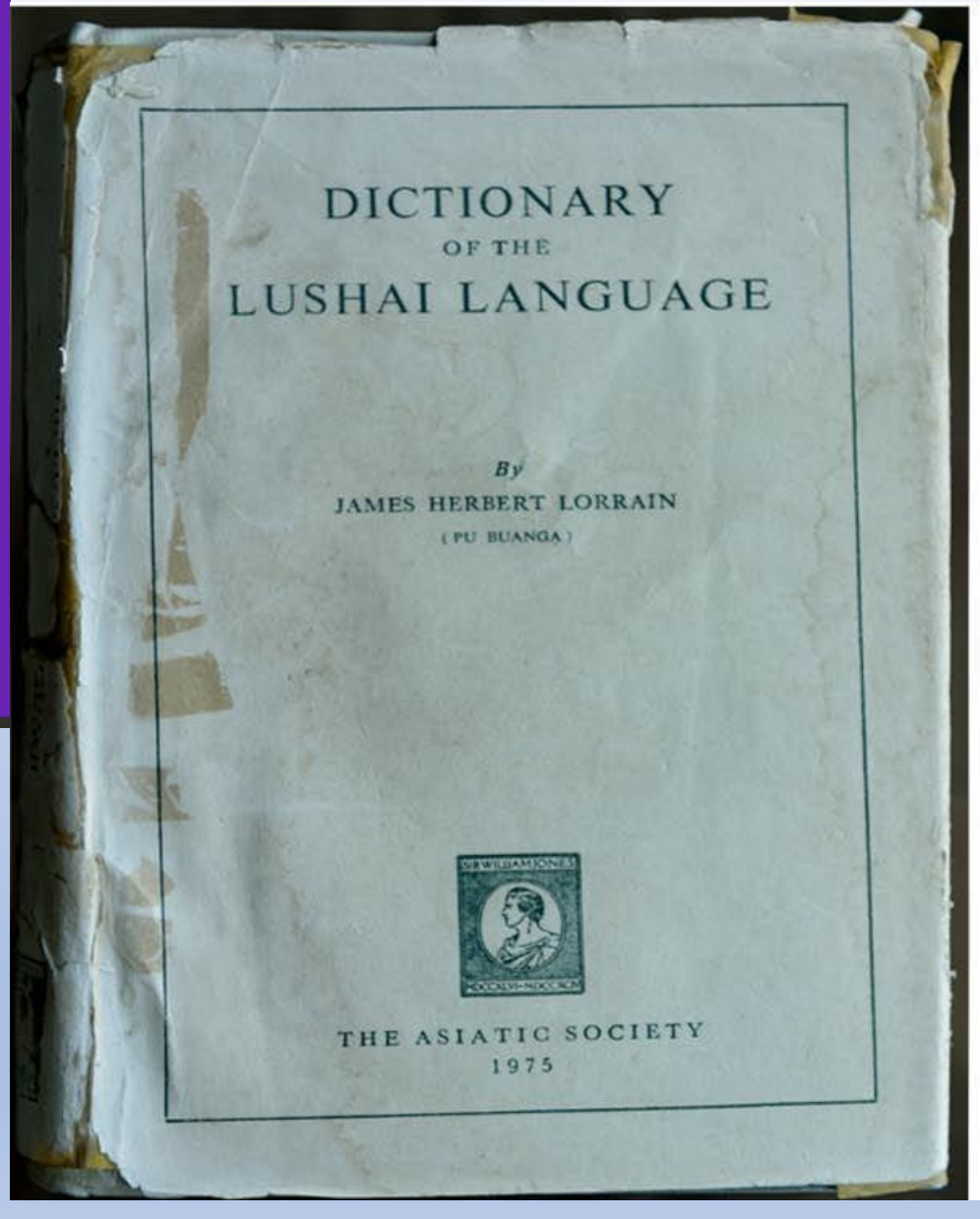
1897 – Mission dissolved by Arthington Aborigines Mission and both returned to England

1897 – Completed Grammar and Dictionary of the Lushai Language (affectionately known as Pu Buanga Dictionary) which was published later. **<u>This work halted the British-Indian Government's plan to impose Bengali language upon the Mizos and as a result the Mizo language survived.</u>**



FOREWORD

DICTIONARY OF THE LUSHAI LANGUAGE



DICTIONARY
OF THE
LUSHAI LANGUAGE

By
JAMES HERBERT LORRAIN
(PU BUANGA)

THE ASIATIC SOCIETY
1975

After a short break, including returning to the UK for a medical course, FWS returned there in 1903.

In April 1904, in Calcutta, he married Margaret Grant of Aberdeen, a United Free Church of Scotland Missionary.

She was a trained teacher who taught at Calcutta Girls' School run by the Scottish Church Mission and both became Baptist missionaries.

At Mizoram with Lorrain they set up a Hospital & School and Mission Church,

That church still flourishes.

Their website records: “From the beginning the pioneer missionaries employed education and literature as means of evangelisation for the Mizo people … they are rightly regarded to be the ones who laid the foundation of Christian literature and education in Mizoram”

Savidge’s house where he could look down on the clouds

14. F.W. SAVIDGE & J.H. LORRAIN IN MIZO TRADITIONAL ATTIRE 1907.

As a young man Savidge had laid a stone bearing his name at Stretham Methodist Chapel in 1885 – before he set off to minister to Head-Hunters on Green Hills, far away

Where he is commemorated on another Memorial Stone

.

And by a F.W. Savidge Memorial Baptist Church

In 2003 the Baptist Church of Mizoram celebrated their centenary.

FWS' grandson Ian Savidge journeyed to India to join them for the occasion.

FWS had a son Cecil Arthur Grant Savidge in 1905 who subsequently married Edris Joan Mould in Mizoram. He went on to have a distinguished public service career serving in India, Pakistan and the UK and was knighted in 1941.

FWS remained in India until he retired in 1925.

When time came for him to leave the country and the people he dearly loved, he took with him a tin can full of Serkawn soil so that when he died a bit of Mizoram might be buried with him.

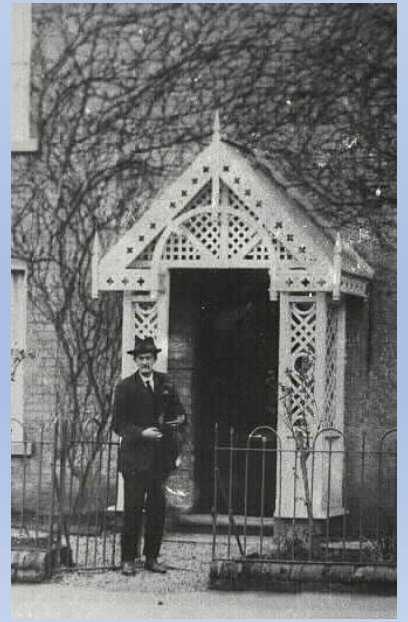
FWS moved to Aberdeen and then set up home in Stotfold, Bedforshire where his wife died in April 1933 aged 72 years.

He then came home to Stretham where he lived with his sister, Mrs Gautrey, in a house on the Newmarket Road.

They converted a cart shed into a room with windows looking out to the garden from there he wrote his memories ‘From Head Hunting to Soul Winning’, a copy of which was sent to the King.

An Evangelistic Mission Church had been established just along the road in January 1884.

Rev A.R. Routledge was pastor of the Mission Hall for over 50 years. He had been there at the start of FWS's work and was there when he returned.



Meanwhile the congregation at the Stretham Baptist Church were having problems with their Chapel, whose foundations were giving way.

The foundation stones of a new building were laid in January 1938. But not by FWS.

For he had died in 1935

The Ely Standard for 4th October 1935 published an obituary.

The funeral service took place at his home. Amongst the mourners were representatives of the Baptist Missionary Society and the Rev Routledge from the Mission Hall.

THE FUNERAL.

The funeral took place at Stretham cemetery on Sunday.

A service was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. Gautrey, Pond-street.

The Rev. R. F. Gascoyne, of Haddenham (Cambridgeshire representative on the B.M.S. General Committee) officiated, and was assisted by Mr. B. R. Wheeler, of London (Assistant Foreign Secretary B.M.S.). Two hymns were sung, "Rock of Ages" and "Abide With Me."

A brief address, based on 2 Samuel, 3, 38 —"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel," was given by Mr. Gascoyne, who said that those words, taken from David's lament at the death of Abner, would be echoed by many lips in Lushai when the news of Mr. Savidge's passing reached them. Some here only knew him in his days of increasing weakness; many knew him in the days of his power, but even they could only guess what Mr. Savidge was to those Indian people among whom he lived—teacher, friend, father and prophet of God.

The Cambridgeshire Times

FAMOUS MISSIONARY INTERRED AT STRETHAM.

Rev. F. W. Savidge's Work in India.

The Rev. Frederick Wm. Savidge, B.A., whose death at Stretham yesterday (Thursday) week, was briefly reported in our last issue, was the son of a Stretham business man.

He was educated at Ely High School, and, inspired by the example of some of his school friends, intended to become a clergyman of the Church of England. He was a private tutor when the call came to missionary service. Early in his life he began a friendship with Mr. J. H. Lorrain; both were baptised and joined the Highgate-road Baptist Church, of which Mr. Savidge retained his membership until the time of his death.

Mr. Robert Arthington, a wealthy gentleman, was interested in spreading the gospel in the world and devoted his wealth to that end. The work begun by Mr. J. H. Lorrain in 1890 was carried on by the two friends when Mr. Savidge joined Mr. Lorrain in 1891.

DIFFICULTIES OVERCOME.

Many difficulties were encountered, but perseverance won and among the Lushai Hill folk a wonderful work was done. Mr. Savidge was the doctor and schoolmaster, as well as the evangelist. Mr. Lorrain and

laltanpuiapachuau.blogspot.com/2015/01/making-disciples-of-all-nations.html

Matana Memo

My analysis on politics, religion & society

Sunday, January 11, 2015

MAKING DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS

Today, the 11th January 2015, marks the 121st anniversary of the arrival of Rev.James Herbert Lorrain and Rev.Frederick William Savidge in Mizoram to devote their life as missionaries to the unreached Mizo people a.ka. Lushais.

Three years before the arrival of the two pioneer missionaries to these head-hunting Mizo people, a Welsh missionary by the name of Rev.William Williams had the privilege of becoming the first missionary to set foot in the Lushai hills. According to Carol MacNeill, BMS missionary in Zaire, due to unsettled conditions, Rev.Williams was only able to remain in Mizoram for about a month.

Lorrain and Savidge first entered Mizoram as missionaries of the Arthington Aborigines Mission but later joined the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) and devoted all their effort to disiple the people of Mizoram who were living in darkness. The BMS mission in Mizoram was concentrated in the south while the northern hills were taken up by missionaries of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission. Prior to the advent of the missionaries, the Mizo people had no alphabet, hence no written language. Today, virtually the entire Mizo peoples have been evangelised and Mizoram boasts a high percentage of literacy – 91.33%

The Mizo people were nomadic warring tribes headed by sovereign village chiefs. They inhabited what the British government termed the Lushai Hills. The British-India government's expansion toward the east often resulted in clashes with the Lushai tribes on whose hunting grounds the foreigners encroached. On the 27th January 1871, a history-changing event took place in Alexandrapur that would forever change the

Matana, Martin, Puia, Laltanpuia

Laltanpuia Pachuau

Follow 43

Rahsiveng, a small locality in Lunglei, is where I'm from. I lived most of my childhood in Lunglei but spent my teenage years in Aizawl. Studied Civil Engineering for a year in south India but went on to study Political Science and History in Shillong.

I write fortnightly articles in Mizo language published by the No 1. Lunglei newspaper Ralvengtu on Tuesdays and

In Mizoram they remember him

Though so respected in India, few now know of him in Stretham

In March 1977 Benzley Wright shared personal memories of FWS.

Speaking of the Newmarket Road house he recalled:
The house originally belonged to Mrs Cockerton & when she died the Holdens came there. Eventually the Gautreys had it & her brother came home from abroad and lived there. He was a retired missionary. They built an old shed, with windows looking out the back on to the garden & he lived there. When they left Dyos took it & he turned it into a café.

The site is now a Chinese Take-Away

Though even he knew very little of FWS’ achievements.

He used to go about to different congress and things; once or twice I went to Cambridge with him & he had his meetings in St Andrew's Street Baptist Church schoolroom. I didn't go & listen, I went with his nephew to the Still & Sugarloaf.

Sometimes wearing native costume, FWS ministered across the country, attracting large crowds. During the 1920s he spoke in Aberdeen, Northampton, Market Harborough, Burnley, Derby and Dover, amongst other places

In 1907 he'd been joined by a young man from Lushai and together they would sing hymns in the Lushai language

BUCKIE.

MISSIONARY ADDRESS.—In the Good Templar Institute Hall on Thursday night, missionary addresses were given by Rev. Joseph Cornish, organising secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, and Rev. F. W. Savidge. Rev. Mr Gibson presided. The addresses, especially of Mr Savidge, proved deeply interesting, his experiences among the South Lushai tribe in India being related in a humorous, as well as an absorbing manner. Hymns, in native dialect, were sung by Challiana, a native convert, and Mr Savidge.

Everywhere he shared his experiences of life amongst the Lushai people – experiences he had featured in *Wide World Magazine* in 1899.

IF BABY CRIES, HE IS GIVEN A WHIFF OR TWO OF MAMMA'S DIRTY OLD PIPE.
From a Photo.] [*by the Authors.*

Among the Head-Hunters of Lushai.

By J. Herbert Lorrain and Fred. W. Savidge, B.A., Ph.D.

The personal narrative of two young missionaries who penetrated into a wild and little-known region and lived among the natives. Now published for the first time, with a complete set of remarkable photographs.

On the north-east frontier of Assam, situated between Burma, Cachar, and Manipur, lies the district known as the home of the head-hunting Lushais. Long and precipitous [illegible] of hills, mostly running north and south, fill up the whole area, and occasionally a peak, rising to a height of 6,000ft., may be seen towering above the lower hills. From its [illegible] stretching as far as the horizon, [illegible] forests of fern-covered trees [illegible] with creepers, [illegible] deep valleys, and now and then a [illegible] stream [illegible] among [illegible] and ver- [illegible] into view. [illegible] genera- [illegible] Lushais [illegible] their abode [illegible] region, [illegible] like real [illegible] of Nature. [illegible] of the [illegible] history [illegible] and of [illegible] war, [illegible] as soon [illegible] under- [illegible] fired [illegible] to [illegible] skulls [illegible] display [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] our- [illegible], or [illegible] [illegible] would [illegible] deter- [illegible] with [illegible] warfare, these people launched [illegible] and, when opportunity [illegible] upon unoffending coolies in [illegible] gardens, murdered them, and [illegible] heads as trophies of their [illegible] they became a terror to the [illegible] Not content with this, even, [illegible] attacked the bungalows of the planters themselves in the hope of carrying off the head of a white man, which they considered of much more value than many black ones. By a treacherous attack they once murdered an Englishman and carried off his child alive into their own jungle. This dastardly outrage had to be promptly avenged, and an expedition was sent into their territories to punish the perpetrators and to rescue the girl. Since this incident, which happened nearly thirty years ago, the British Government has had a continuous connection with the Lushai country.

[illegible] (ON THE LEFT) ASSUME LORRAIN—IN LUSHAI DRESS.
From a Photo.

But as little was known of this bloodthirsty race, we resolved if possible to visit them and ascertain what possibilities there might be in them. If men of such courage had their energies directed into another channel, we thought they might become an infinite blessing to their fellow-men.

After trying to enter their country for two or three years, we at last obtained permission to live among them. We were entering upon a new undertaking and visiting a strange country, but we were full of hope. There were two modes of conveyance open to us. Either we must walk a distance of 150 miles, taking all provision with us for the way; or go by a more circuitous route by water. Although it would take more time to reach our destination, we chose the latter as being more convenient and more comfortable.

We engaged some native boats; and by look-

OUR TWO MISSIONARIES ON THEIR WAY UP INTO LUSHAILAND—THEIR BOATS WERE OFTEN ALMOST DASHED TO PIECES.
From a Photo. by the Authors.

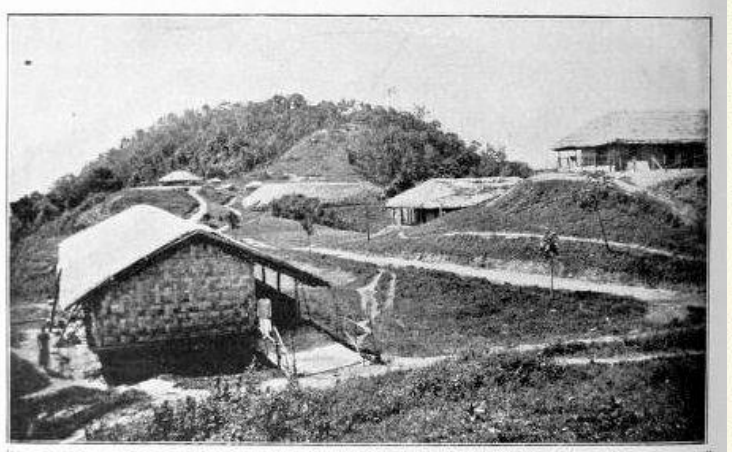
A LUSHAI MAN AND WOMAN—THESE ARE THE KIND OF PEOPLE OUR MISSIONARIES LIVED AND WORKED AMONG.
From a Photo. by the Authors.

waists in the water, and vainly endeavouring to move an inch against the rushing torrent. We quickly jumped into our clothes, and it was a case of "all hands at the pump." When climbing such dangerous places, strong ropes have to be fastened to the boa[illegible] wh[illegible] it a[illegible] sta[illegible] wit[illegible] ups[illegible] bou[illegible] wh[illegible] the[illegible] T[illegible] see[illegible] afte[illegible] cat[illegible] of [illegible] the [illegible] goi[illegible] selv[illegible] on [illegible] flow[illegible] water was too deep for punting, and progress could only be made by using a bamboo with an iron hook attached to one end, and holding on to the overhanging branches and jerking forward a few yards at a time. The rise and fall of the water is so rapid at times, that pieces of wreck may be seen swinging high in the air *tied to a tree*, the boat having been submerged when the water had suddenly fallen in the night.

Sometimes trees which have been hurled

ing at the accom[illegible] seen that these a[illegible] They are about [illegible] and covered wit[illegible] raised about 4ft. [illegible] us from the hea[illegible] required to prope[illegible] one man using a[illegible] dexterously twist[illegible] the motion as w[illegible] stand up, nor sit [illegible] seat, but had us[illegible] position. In thi[illegible] to be done. E[illegible] sleeping were un[illegible] same operations [illegible] dining-table.

Early one mo[illegible] hearing the boat[illegible] and as we peep[illegible] reached a point [illegible] menced. The n[illegible]



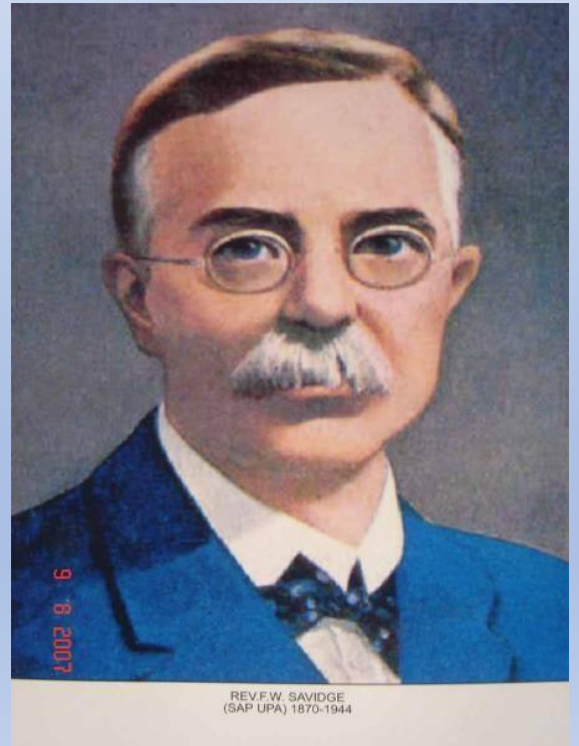
"FORT AIJAL, OUR DESTINATION—THE LARGE BAMBOO HOUSE ON THE LEFT IS A POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICE."
From a Photo. by the Authors.

Stretham's historian Beatrice Stevens had personal memories.

In notes on her own family she recorded how her father, Henry Acred and FWS had been friends from childhood.

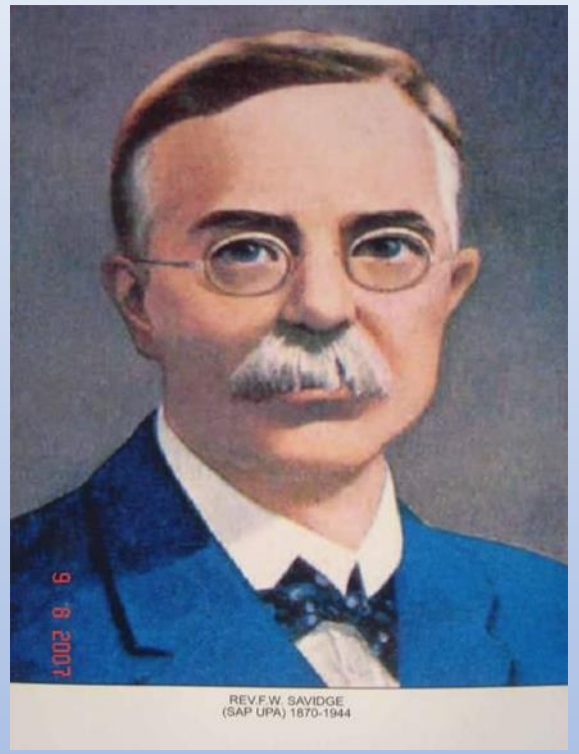
Fred, his sister Addie (Adelaide) and Henry Acred formed a studious trio. They enrolled for a Correspondence Course in Pitman's Shorthand and the three of them shared a strong Christian faith.
It was when Henry, Fred and Addie were studying together that Briggs Savidge and other influential people decided that a new Wesleyan Chapel should be built and the stone-laying took place on July 15th 1885. Both Fred and Addie had their names engraved on stones but Henry was unable to afford this amount so he had his initials carved on a brick

In 2018 members of the flourishing Baptist Church of Mizoram made the long journey to his home village in the flat fenland to dedicate a Headstone to a Missionary whose memory they cherish.



Their 2019 Calendar features their Journey to Stretham – and the natives who welcomed them

Frederick W. Savidge



Stretham's UN-forgotten Missionary

by Mike Petty